UN

UNITED NATIONS

E

Economic and Social Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.4/1997/SR.10
29 April 1997

ENGLISH
Original: FRENCH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Fifty-third session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 10th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Monday, 17 March 1997, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. SOMOL (Czech Republic)

CONTENTS

STATEMENT BY MR. AZEDDINE LARAKI, SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE ORGANIZATION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE THIRD DECADE TO COMBAT RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (continued)

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of this document to the Official Records Editing Section, room E.4108, Palais des Nations, Geneva.

Any corrections to the records of the public meetings of the Commission at this session will be consolidated in a single corrigendum, to be issued shortly after the end of the session.

GE.97-11055 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

STATEMENT BY MR. AZEDDINE LARAKI, SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE ORGANIZATION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE

1. Mr. LARAKI (Organization of the Islamic Conference) said that the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) had been participating, since its creation, in the Commission's efforts to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms, which were also an integral part of the Islamic faith. Thus, inspired by the eternal values of Islam, it had in 1995 adopted a Declaration on Human Rights in Islam that should contribute to building a world of peace, justice, tolerance and respect for human dignity.

2. In recent years the world had seen a resurgence of conflicts due to mounting hatred and intolerance both within States - among ethnic groups, tribes and nationalities - and between States. On the eve of the twenty-first century, more than 2 billion poor people were trying to survive in rural settings threatened by environmental disasters or in urban areas plagued with unemployment. The international community needed more than ever to face those challenges in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

3. Among the conflicts of which civilian populations most often bore the brunt, there were four that had their origin in failure to respect the right of peoples to self-determination. The first was the conflict between Israel and the Palestinian people. OIC supported the Middle East peace process on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978) and of the "land for peace" formula. In building its settlements, violating the peace accords it had signed and the fourth Geneva Convention, and refusing to comply with the Security Council resolutions, Israel was preventing the Palestinian people from creating an independent State on their national soil.

4. The second was the bloody conflict of Jammu and Kashmir, where the people had been fighting for 50 years to obtain their right to self-determination, as recognized by the Security Council, and where massive violations of human rights were being committed. OIC, which had always declared itself in favour of the exercise of all such rights and of a peaceful settlement of the conflict in accordance with United Nations resolutions, hoped that the proposal by the Prime Minister of Pakistan for a dialogue with India would be followed up and would make it possible to secure peace.

5. Thirdly, referring to the tragedy in Bosnia and Herzegovina, he warned against the danger of letting war criminals go unpunished and called upon the international community to make sure that they were indeed prosecuted by the International Tribunal; otherwise respect for human rights, as provided for in the Dayton Peace Accord, would be a vain hope.

6. Lastly, the drama affecting Azerbaijan, the victim of Armenian aggression, was another cause for concern to OIC. The international community must act without delay to ensure that the territorial integrity

of that country was restored and that the flagrant violations of the fundamental rights of its population living in occupied Azeri territory were stopped.

7. OIC also shared other concerns of the international community, particularly with regard to racial, cultural and religious discrimination, the persecution of minorities and the upsurge of nationalistic movements. Some minorities, such as the Muslim minorities of the former Yugoslavia, whose national and civil rights were being violated by the authorities in place in Kosovo and Sandzak, required particular attention.

8. He wished to pay a tribute to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and other humanitarian organizations endeavouring to mitigate the sufferings of refugees and displaced persons; OIC and its specialized institutions were contributing to those efforts. Aside from conflicts, however, poverty itself was an enemy that the Commission had to combat in order to preserve the most basic human right - the right to life. With a view to achieving social justice, OIC hoped that it would soon define a practical strategy to ensure respect for the right to development.

9. OIC was convinced that the Commission would be able to avoid any selective or discriminatory treatment of human rights issues. The fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights would provide the international community with the opportunity to reiterate its commitment to human rights and the High Commissioner for Human Rights could count on the cooperation and support of OIC in preparing to mark that event in a worthy manner.

10. In conclusion, he recalled that revealed religions had been the first guarantees of human rights; based on the sublime values of Islam, OIC was committed to working in concert with the international community for peace, justice and the progress of humankind.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE THIRD DECADE TO COMBAT RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (agenda item 13) (continued)

(E/CN.4/1997/68 and Add.1, 70, 71 and Add.1 and 2; E/CN.4/1996/72 and Add.2 to 4; A/51/301)

11. Mr. VERGNE-SABOIA (Brazil) said that racism and racial discrimination regrettably continued to exist in various forms throughout the world in spite of the international and national legal standards prohibiting them and the many international campaigns aimed at eradicating those practices. Two main phenomena were to be noted in that regard. The first was ethnic conflicts, which were the source of some of the most serious and massive violations of human rights and whose solution presented a major difficulty for the international community. The international community should give priority to preventive action, which meant developing awareness of human rights in the communities concerned and responding to their legitimate grievances.

12. The second phenomenon was the resurgence of racism and racial discrimination in developed countries. That had to be seen in the context

of economic crisis, unemployment and, in some cases, national frustration, but it could nevertheless be combatted. It was apparent, moreover, from the report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, Mr. Glèle-Ahanhanzo, on his missions to France, the United Kingdom and Germany (E/CN.4/1996/72 and Add.2 to 4) that most of the Governments of the democratic societies affected were trying earnestly to resolve those problems in an adequate way. In that regard, his delegation was pleased to learn that the European Union had designated 1997 as the European Year against racism and xenophobia, and it had noted with interest the warnings given by Mr. Xavier Emmanuelli, State Secretary for Humanitarian Action in France, regarding the misuse of freedom of expression for the dissemination of messages of racial hatred, and his advocacy of the need to punish those responsible. Such messages could only encourage the violence that was directed in some countries against certain groups, such as migrant workers and their families or refugees, and the rise of movements of the extreme right, particularly in Europe, which advocated racial intolerance and racist ideas.

13. The international community had to combat those phenomena using the international human rights machinery. The Commission and the Sub-Commission played a role of paramount importance in that regard, as did UNESCO, which had the task of promoting a culture of tolerance. There was also a need to strengthen the resources of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination so that it could carry out its functions effectively. It was important, furthermore, to pursue the activities undertaken within the framework of the Programme of Action for the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination and to encourage initiatives such as the seminar to assess the implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, held at Geneva in September 1996. Lastly, his delegation was in favour of the organization of a world conference on racism before the end of the twentieth century.

14. As a multi-ethnic and multicultural country, Brazil had always rejected racism and racial discrimination, and had always endeavoured to promote good relations between the various racial groups making up its population. Conscious, however, of the fact that the economic and social conditions of black and coloured people, who accounted for 44.2 per cent of Brazil's population, were generally not as good as those of white people, the Government had taken specific measures to ensure equal rights and equal opportunities for all Brazilians, regardless of race, and to recognize the role of blacks in the construction of Brazil, and particularly in its culture. President Cardoso had set up an inter-ministerial working group composed of representatives of civil society and various ministries to develop policies aimed at the black population, in particular with a view to eliminating any racial discrimination against them in employment, enhancing their image in the media, promoting tolerance through the education system, recognizing the right of the Quilombo communities to the lands they occupied and resolving problems faced by the black population in the areas of health, religion and culture. The Brazilian Government hoped, through those measures, to raise awareness of the important contribution of Africa and Afro-Brazilian communities to Brazil's national identity and to improve the living conditions of its black and coloured population, thereby strengthening further the integration of Brazilian society.

15. Ms. HERNANDEZ QUESADA (Cuba) said that the reports of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (E/CN.4/1996/72 and Add.2 to 4, and E/CN.4/1997/71 and Add.1 and 2) currently before the Commission gave a good idea of the problems posed on the eve of the twenty-first century by the resurgence of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia worldwide, and particularly in some countries, where such ideas were espoused by established political parties that were acquiring more and more power.

16. The fact was that the disappearance of apartheid had not put an end to racism. On the contrary, racism had increased, particularly in the developed world, in new forms, including the xenophobia and intolerance shown towards immigrants, whose numbers were unfortunately growing as the gap widened between countries of the North and the South. Some countries which set themselves up as champions of human rights denied human rights to large population groups that nevertheless contributed in a substantial way to boosting those countries' output and revenues. It was clear that the prohibition of the dissemination of ideas based upon racial superiority or hatred advocated by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in its General Recommendation XV, adopted in 1993, constituted a legitimate and necessary restriction on the rights to freedom of opinion, expression and association, which - as some countries tended to forget - went hand in hand with certain duties and responsibilities to establish a fair balance between all human rights.

17. In that context, it was important to recognize the potential role of means of communication and computers, including the Internet, in promoting racist propaganda. In that regard, her delegation endorsed the recommendations made by the seminar to assess the implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination with particular reference to articles 4 and 6. That seminar had, unfortunately, been the only activity undertaken within the framework of the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, owing to lack of resources to execute a meaningful programme of action and to lack of interest on the part of a large number of member States. It was time for all States Members of the United Nations to assume their full responsibilities and participate fully in that innovative process. The world conference on racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia should be carefully prepared and should be held before the end of the century in order to establish clearly the goals to be attained in the fight against racism and the resources that would have to be made available for that purpose in the twenty-first century.

18. Mrs. JANJUA (Pakistan) said that the demise of apartheid had marked only a first stage in the fight against racism and the battle was far from over, as was clear from the report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (E/CN.4/1997/71 and Add.1 and 2). Although the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination had been ratified by more than 150 States, racial discrimination, as defined in article 1 of the Convention, not only had not ceased but had taken on new forms, of which the worst were xenophobia and related intolerance. Thus, in many parts of the world, the rights of immigrants, migrant workers, refugees and minorities were being violated in pursuance of the doctrine of racial superiority.

19. The discrimination against Muslim minorities in several countries by racist and fascist groups was especially disturbing. The tendency to equate Islam with fundamentalism and terrorism was all the more dangerous as the concepts of terrorism and extremism were totally alien to Islamic religion and tradition. The Seventh Islamic Summit of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, held at Casablanca in December 1994, had for that reason adopted a resolution calling upon all States to oppose the attempts aimed at presenting a distorted image of Islam and Muslims with a view to justifying aggression against and occupation of Muslim countries and peoples.

20. Her delegation regretted that the only activity the Centre for Human Rights had been able to carry out during the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination had been the holding of a seminar in September 1996 to assess the implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. It also noted with regret that the idea of convening an international conference on racism as one approach to giving effect to the aims and objectives of the Third Decade had not attracted wide support.

21. Pakistan, which had a pluri-ethnic population, had always been at the forefront of the fight against racism. It had been among the first countries to sign and ratify the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. The people of Pakistan, guided by the precepts of equality and brotherhood preached by Islam and enshrined in the Constitution of Pakistan, would continue to work for the complete elimination of all forms of racial discrimination throughout the world and would support all those working towards that end.

22. Mrs. DIALLO (Senegal) observed that the persistence of racism, xenophobia and intolerance undermined the very foundation of the United Nations, since non-discrimination was a principle clearly established in the Charter and in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and constituted a serious threat to human rights and democracy. Notwithstanding the many legal instruments that had been adopted, racism and intolerance were on the increase.

23. There seemed to be a gap between States' commitments at the international level and the resources made available to give them concrete form. It was incumbent upon every State to put the international rules elaborated by the United Nations into practice. However, it appeared at the seminar to assess the implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination organized by the Centre for Human Rights that the universality of that instrument, although ratified by more than 140 States, was in question. A large number of States had entered reservations, especially concerning article 4, or were reluctant to make the declaration provided for in article 14 recognizing the competence of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination to receive and consider communications from individuals or groups of individuals. Since the entry into force of the Convention, less than 10 communications had been examined by the Committee, a figure that pointed to an obvious discrepancy between the declared will of States and the real situation. Yet in order to combat racism, it was essential to make international remedies available to the victims. Such remedies were also a means not of condemning States but of

evaluating the effectiveness of national procedures, identifying any shortcomings in them and, where necessary, improving or harmonizing the relevant legislation.

24. It was equally important to ensure strict respect for article 4, which called for States parties to adopt immediate and positive measures designed to eradicate all incitement to racial hatred and racial discrimination. Freedom of expression was, of course, the most precious of freedoms, the symbol of pluralist society, but it was essential to trace its limits, for when racism began to be manifested verbally, it was not long before it was also manifested in actions. The need to place some restrictions on freedom of expression had, furthermore, been emphasized in all the Committee's general recommendations and in the final report on the right to freedom of opinion and expression (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1992/9 and Add.1) submitted by Mr. Joinet and Mr. Türk to the Sub-Commission at its forty-fourth session.

25. Her delegation therefore believed that among the various means employed by the United Nations to combat racism, strict application of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination remained the surest way for States to act in that field and to share what they had in common, namely the cement of universal values.

26. Mr. PERERA (World Federation of United Nations Associations) said that it was not surprising, even though the international community was now in the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, that progress in that field was so slow. Far from having disappeared, racial prejudices handed down from generation to generation had today become dogmas for some. The only way of eradicating those attitudes and the resultant racial discrimination was to provide effective education within the family, schools, synagogues, temples, churches and mosques, involving non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and above all the media, especially radio, television and other electronic means of communication.

27. That clearly meant educating the educators in the first place. Seminars of the kind sponsored by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination should be conducted in every subregion of the world and followed by an international conference on racism. In that regard, it was regrettable that the Committee's activities were not being adequately funded. The role of the teaching profession in combating racism was crucial, as very justifiably emphasized in article 5.2 of the UNESCO Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice.

28. However, progress in fighting racism depended above all on the mobilization of Governments, which must give priority to effective implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, in particular by recognizing the competence of the Committee to receive individual communications; they must also ensure the democratic functioning of democratic institutions and carry out appropriate education and information programmes.

29. Ms. SHAH (Human Rights Advocates) said that her organization supported the work of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. Countries should extend

their cooperation to him and also facilitate the application of international legal standards in domestic courts. There was all too often a gap between theoretical proclamations of equality between communities and the actual situation. Many countries which had officially passed legislation prohibiting racial discrimination harboured, in practice, insidious or indirect forms of discrimination.

30. Human Rights Advocates was concerned by certain indications that the United States was being slow to apply international standards on non-discrimination. The United States Constitution, for example, did not offer adequate protection for racial minorities. According to the Supreme Court, a "race-neutral" government action did not violate the Constitution unless the plaintiff could prove discriminatory intent, a requirement that was inconsistent with the standards of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, which defined racial discrimination as action that had the purpose or effect of denying fundamental freedoms to minorities. Racial disparities in the criminal justice system were prevalent at every stage of the process, from charging to sentencing. The death penalty, for example, was more often called for - and more often applied - against members of certain racial groups, including minors.

31. Such realities must not be ignored. If the work of the Special Rapporteur was to be effective, the public had to be informed of his dialogue with Governments. On account of United States "concerns", however, he had not, as he had originally intended, included his observations on the comments of the United States in his report. It was unclear why the Special Rapporteur should comply with the wishes of countries he was investigating.

32. In countries where racism was on the rise, it was very important to align domestic law with international standards concerning non-discrimination, which did not require a showing of intent. The Commission on Human Rights should invite countries to cooperate more with the Special Rapporteur and take due account of his conclusions and recommendations.

33. Mr. KIRKYACHARIAN (Movement against Racism and for Friendship among Peoples) said that after the defeat of apartheid or the victory of the civil rights movement in the United States, the resurgence of racism in all its forms, including in the country of Martin Luther King, had surprised more than a few politicians around the world. In France, where his organization was based, the party of the extreme right was making steady progress and no longer hesitated to proclaim the inequality of races. The results of a poll, for the time being still confidential, revealed that a majority of French people now felt that it was just as legitimate to express racist as other ideas.

34. Those and other facts demonstrated the urgent need to convene a world conference on racism, and many NGOs believed that it should be one of the principal objectives of the United Nations.

35. Racism was a "total social phenomenon" in the sense intended by Marcel Mauss: developing under certain conditions, it brought together and fused all kinds of ideas about the state of society, the economy and

politics. It thus became a powerful myth against which it was difficult to take action without a global political will on the part of societies, leaders and States.

36. Any effort of resistance was certainly to be welcomed, but the youth-oriented campaigns pursued for several years by the Council of Europe still represented only a very modest step in that direction. The European Union had decided to hold a European Year against Racism and, even better, had made funding available for that purpose, but many organizations believed that it would be more useful at the practical level for Europe to make the fight against racism one of the principles of the Treaty of the European Union, now that the text was being brought up to date.

37. People should not fool themselves by saying that racism and immigration were two distinct problems: measures in Europe generally, and in Germany and France in particular, which made the status of immigrants more precarious at the same time, strengthened, in the public mind, the idea that immigration and unemployment were linked and provided grist for the mill of racist propaganda. What hope was there of the racist extreme right being weakened if the parties in power borrowed its arguments? Faced with the advance of racist ideas both in Europe and worldwide, citizens must stand their ground. Political leaders should not forget that they were citizens too, and that they would be judged by their actions.

38. Ms. WÖLTE (Women's International League for Peace and Freedom) said that, as UNESCO noted in its contribution to the Commission's fifty-third session (E/CN.4/1997/70), there was a clear rise in racism and xenophobia in the world, even though it had just been proven in South Africa that racism in its institutionalized form of apartheid could be vanquished and dismantled. Her organization was convinced that a concerted effort by all Governments could bring racism and racial discrimination to a halt and it deplored the lack of real interest by States Members of the United Nations in the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination. A particular danger for societies came from discrimination hidden in laws and policies. The tendency to blame rising unemployment and budget deficits in Europe on immigrants and to deprive them of their economic, social and cultural rights was a way of venting people's increasing frustration at the immigrants' expense.

39. For peace to exist there must be respect for the dignity and rights of all, whether citizens, refugees, immigrants, asylum-seekers or tourists. Her organization welcomed the European Union's decision to declare 1997 the European Year against Racism and was encouraged by the growing involvement of European youth in fighting the scourge of racism. However, the Schengen Agreement had also marked the first step in closing Europe's frontiers to aliens. Policies and laws relating to asylum-seekers had been tightened everywhere. There had even been an increase in certain inhuman practices such as "preventive detention" for asylum-seekers or persons without a valid residence permit in Germany. That country's policy concerning the children of immigrants, especially Turks, Moroccans, Tunisians and nationals of the former Yugoslavia, who now needed a visa or a special residence permit, discriminated

against some nationalities and severely impeded the integration of foreigners into German society. An estimated 800,000 children who had been born in Germany or had lived there for most of their lives were affected.

40. Her organization asked Governments to act on the recommendations made by the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance in his 1996 report on his missions to France, Germany and the United Kingdom (E/CN.4/1996/72 and Add.2 to 4), especially those concerning immigration and the integration of foreigners. It also called on those States which had not yet ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination to do so without delay and urged them to lend their financial support to strengthen the activities of the Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination.

41. Mr. GUPTA (Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organization) said that the documents before the Commission clearly showed the ambivalence of all those who sought to champion morality in politics in the name of human rights. In his report (E/CN.4/1997/71), the Special Rapporteur pointed to the various forms of economic, social and cultural discrimination that persisted in the United States. All over the world, immigrants had become scapegoats for economic crises or insecurity. In that context, the lack of interest, support and financial resources for the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination and its related Programme of Action - over which the General Assembly had expressed regret, as indicated in the Secretary-General's report (E/CN.4/1997/68) - was truly disturbing. The facts mentioned in the report of the seminar to assess the implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination with particular reference to articles 4 and 6 (E/CN.4/1997/68/Add.1) were even more serious: the report explained, for example, that it was perfectly possible for appeals to racial hatred to be launched on the Internet in the United States and disseminated around the globe.

42. It should also be pointed out that, of the 147 States parties to the Convention, the few that had made reservations to article 4 were for the most part "advanced democracies". Whatever the technical reasons given, the fact remained that racism was not about to disappear from public life in those countries, even if their constitutions or laws officially proclaimed the contrary. It was often not only the agents of State power but the holders of social and economic power who violated the fundamental rights of tribal groups, minorities and disadvantaged social strata. It was necessary for States, and particularly the developed ones, to take the initiative in building awareness and also in providing their financial support for the Programme of Action for the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, which needed support not only in words. If the developed democracies were sincere in their commitment to combat racism, they should begin by treating the minorities and immigrants in their territories humanely instead of using human rights as a pretext for putting conditions on trade and aid for developing countries.

43. The Commission on Human Rights must intensify its efforts in the struggle against racism. It was to be hoped that tangible progress would be made by the end of the Third Decade.

44. Mr. BONARDI (International League for the Rights and Liberation of Peoples), speaking on behalf of Black African people living in Mauritania alongside the Arab-Berber people known collectively as Moors, denounced the systematic policy of racial discrimination imposed by the latter on the former in all areas. That policy had resulted, particularly after the veritable genocide during the "Senegalese-Mauritanian events" of 1989, in the deportation to Senegal and Mali of more than 100,000 Black Mauritanians whose homes, fields and livestock had been taken over by Moors. Since that time, thousands of the Black Mauritanians remaining in the south of the country had been the victims of killings, especially among the military, disappearances, torture and humiliation, or had been discharged from military service without compensation, yet the persons responsible for those crimes were sure of going unpunished since an amnesty had been decreed in June 1991. He cited in particular the cases of three Black officers executed after a summary trial, and of persons detained for speaking out against racism in Mauritania, who had died in custody under atrocious conditions after a trial during which they had not had a lawyer to defend them.

45. The list of instances of harassment of the Black community in Mauritania was long: progressive exclusion from all economic activities, dismissal or furlough of cadres and officials who refused to join the Democratic and Social Republican Party, expropriation of land for the benefit of Moorish businessmen, refusal to issue identity cards and other essential official papers, and identity checks solely for Black Mauritanians travelling inside the country; those practices were combined with the cultural genocide of Black Mauritanians, victims of Arabization and of the refusal to provide for general instruction in other Black African languages. All those facts, as attested in numerous accounts, including a publication by Human Rights Watch/Africa, fostered a Mauritanian Arab ethnocracy and undermined a multicultural and multilingual Mauritania.

46. His organization called on the Commission to mandate the Special Rapporteur, Mr. Maurice Glèlè-Ahanhanzo, to investigate racism in Mauritania.

47. Ms. GIRMA (African Association of Education for Development) said that, after studying the documents presented to the Commission, her organization was more than ever convinced that new approaches were indispensable to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance. All observers, including UNESCO, the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the participants in the seminar to assess the implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination with particular reference to articles 4 and 6, had noted that those scourges were on the rise and assuming new forms. They had also noted with concern that the international community was showing little ardour in combating them despite the imminent danger they represented. There had, of course, been a few international seminars, but concerted efforts had to be made at the global level without further delay to prevent the political exploitation of those phenomena by extremist movements. It was essential to protect those human beings who were exposed to constant humiliation and suffering, used as scapegoats and driven from their homes and their countries by ethnic hatred, often to endure a ghetto existence abroad in "difficult suburbs". It was high time that the world said "no" to an atmosphere of hate that was unhealthy for all.

48. A fragile social harmony still prevailed in countries such as France, for example, because civil society there was generous and determined, but in Africa, in countries where civil and political rights were non-existent, where ethnic politics was the order of the day, where the dominating ethnic group was continuously harassing civil society, the bulwark it presented was indeed weak.

49. There could be no stability in countries where racial discrimination and ethnic strife were rampant, where some believed that their prosperity meant the rejection and suffering of other human beings, where the interest of one ethnic or racial group prevailed over the general interest, where the building of roads, schools, hospitals and other facilities took no account of the country as a whole, or where jobs were reserved for a specific group. As things now stood, only a world conference on racism and intolerance, promoting a vigorous and innovative approach to the various aspects and manifestations of intolerance, would have the required psychological impact to mobilize the international community effectively against racism.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.